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## THE NATIONAL PEABODY FOUNDATION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CORRE- SPONDENCE

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By THOMAS EDWARD OLIVER, State Chairman for Illinois

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IT is good news to be able to announce that the dreams of those who first perceived the great educational and cultural value of correspondence between pupils of different countries are soon to be realized. The George Peabody Foundation has secured from private sources a fund for this purpose. The same institution has set aside a building for housing the necessary machinery of administration and operation on the campus of the George Peabody College for Teachers at Nashville, Tennessee, and has appointed Dr. A. I. Roehm as Director of the "National Bureau of French-American Educational Correspondence." Dr. Roehm is now actively engaged in organizing the work in every state in the Union. In the Middle West state chairmen have been appointed for Iowa, Missouri, Oklahoma, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Kansas, Texas.

The plans of the Peabody Foundation have the hearty endorsement of the United States Department of State, the French Ministry of Education, The United States Bureau of Education, the French High Commission to the United States (henceforth to be known as the *Direction Générale des Services Français aux Etats-Unis*), the Modern Language Section of the National Educational Association, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Educational Section of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and many other educational, cultural, and commercial organizations.

The first branch of the work to be established will be the correspondence between French and American schools. Monsieur Charles Garnier of the French Ministry of Education is to have charge of the central French office in Paris which is sending to the central American office in Nashville lists of pupils in the French lycées and collèges who have been recommended by their teachers. Similarly, schools and colleges in this country are to send to the

central bureau in Nashville lists of American pupils. The details of assigning correspondents will be handled in Nashville. The plan calls for exchange of letters between boys only and girls only. All correspondence must be accessible to the entire class and to the teacher, as it is felt that supervision is desirable, at least in the earlier stages. Care will be taken, however, to encourage spontaneity and individuality and to prevent supervision from cramping the pupils' efforts at originality.

After mature reflection, it has been suggested that the wisest way to inaugurate the interchange is to have the pupils write first in their own language. Later the foreign idiom will be substituted. Meanwhile a considerable number of excellent model letters in the foreign tongue will have been received and studied. Thus, the young correspondents may avoid the pitfalls and ludicrous results that were too often the outcome when pupils attempted to write in the foreign tongue at the outset.

In order to facilitate the choice of correspondents and also to increase interest, the enrollment blanks call for information on the preparation of each pupil, the business or profession of the father, the pupil's own special interests and tastes, and similar matters. The main purpose to be emphasized is that of cultural and intellectual exchange; real information about the foreign country is the desired end, and not merely the description of everyday happenings. Hence it is planned that each class receive correspondence from many localities in the foreign land so as to widen the field of interest. As far as possible there will be a weekly exchange. An important factor to be emphasized is the cultivation of a good epistolary style, although this should not unduly hamper the larger purpose of the plan. To quote from an article by Mr. Claxton, Commissioner of Education, in the September 15, 1919 number of "School Life";—"Linguistic training will not be the only educational end served. Along with the letters there will be a fine exchange of historical, artistic, geographical, manufactural, commercial, and home-life material and information, clippings, picture postals, kodak views, etc., leading up to the deepest exchanges of human sympathies and ideals that will reinforce international good-will."

The national bureau will issue bulletins to the teacher showing how best to direct the pupils in this correspondence and giving

advice based upon experience as this shall develop. Not merely high schools are to be admitted to the plan, but colleges, universities, clubs and even private classes.

Success is assured if the cities and towns of the United States will coöperate. This coöperation must be financial to a small degree, at least in the beginning. There are two plans for this. The first asks for a single contribution of two dollars for each thousand inhabitants of the community that desires to adopt this plan. Already many cities have sent in their quotas. This payment entitles every school in the city to enjoy the service of the Bureau. It is particularly necessary that the funds be raised as soon as possible, since the George Peabody Foundation has guaranteed not only the office expenses in America, but, temporarily at least, those in France also. Confidence is felt that the endowment fund will be so increased by these contributions that it will prove ample for future needs. The next step, to be taken as soon as the funds are sufficient, is the establishment of a National Spanish-American Bureau for letter-exchange with all Spanish-speaking countries. Full authorization for the establishment of such a bureau has already been received from the Department of State, and there is no doubt of the enthusiastic reception of the plan in Spain and South America. Further plans call for the extension of the work to other countries of foreign speech, and, for the purposes of cultural exchange, even to other English-speaking countries. For the present no government authorizations are contemplated for lands of German speech. Whatever extensions are authorized will not require any additional quota payments as one such payment entitles a community to participation in all the activities of the bureau.

For communities that do not desire to pay on the quota basis there has been authorized another method:—Each pupil participating will pay an annual fee of ten cents, the surplus of such sums to go into the permanent endowment fund.

The machinery for collecting the money under either plan is very simple. There are to be state chairmen to whom the chairmen of the various cities will send their quotas. City chairmen are to deduct seven per cent of the sums to pay for expenses of collection and administration. State chairmen also deduct seven per cent for similar expenses. Usually the local chairmen will be the

teachers or the school principals concerned. The state chairman will usually be an officer of the state university. As a basis of calculating the quota the present population will be taken. When the quota is complete it should be sent to the state chairman who will forward it to the national treasurer, Mrs. E. Y. Chapin, care of the American Trust and Banking Co., Chattanooga, Tennessee. All moneys are to be held in trust by the George Peabody Foundation, which will make annual reports to the United States Bureau of Education. The moneys collected under the fee method are to be remitted by the teachers directly to the Bureau. In this case five per cent will be returned for office expenses of the local chairmen and five per cent for those of the State Chairman.

It is not advisable that the appeal for funds under the quota system be confined to the schools concerned. It should be made to the entire community. For instance, business men's clubs, women's clubs and commercial organizations have been approached with generous response. As soon as quotas have been secured, information and enrollment blanks will be sent out. If a city does not go on the quota basis, the city chairman writes to the Bureau for literature and enrollment blanks which he distributes to the teachers of his city. The teachers fill out the enrollment blanks and send them with the 10c fees directly to the Bureau. Any institutions or classes not otherwise reached may write directly to the National Bureau, Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tenn.

The friends of the movement are confident that the deep interest already shown will spread rapidly throughout the country. Surely the plan has immense promise.

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